

UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS LOWELL
CENTER FOR LOWELL HISTORY
ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION

SHIFTING GEARS PROJECT
LAWRENCE

INFORMANT: MADELINE & JOSEPH CARPENITO

INTERVIEWER: YILDEREY ERDENER

DATE: JULY 25, 1988

Y = YILDEREY

M = MADELINE

J = JOSEPH

SF-LA-T523

Y: So today is July 25th, 1988. My guests are Joseph, Joseph you call yourself?

M: [Unclear]

Y: Joseph uh (--)

J: Carpenito.

Y: Carpenito. C A R P E N I T O [Joseph spells along with Yilderey] Carpenito. It's a nice Italian name I guess.

J: Yeah, real Italian.

Y: And his wife Madeline Carpenito. What's your maiden name?

M: My maiden name was [Fiakeno?].

Y: Oh, that's another, that's another Italian nice (--)

M: Italian, [comment unclear-she speaks too softly and seems to be at a distance]

Y: You know it sounds so good, Italian language. I like French and Italian. I mean the intonation is like uh, like music.

M: Yeah, it's, if you can speak Italian like we can, not the well spoken, you can pick up the French easy enough too. (Y: Oh yeah) Yeah, because it's a lot, a lot of the words are the same.

Y: And um, it is hard to ask questions at the same time for both of you, but I wrote down all of these questions. I have hundreds of them, but I'm not going to tire you too much.

M: Okay. Yeah, we'll answer one at a time.

Y: So um, can you tell me your parent's name?

M: My mother's name was Patrina. (Y: Patrina?) Patrina. (Y: And your father?) And my father's name was Carlo.

Y: And you were born in Lawrence?

M: In Lawrence on Lawrence Street in fact.

Y: Oh! And that was the year 19, (M: 1922) '22. (M: Yeah, August 1st) What about uh (--) August 1st?

M: Come up another birthday.

Y: Oh, I should call you and wish you a happy birthday. What is your parents?

J: My father was Philip, Philiciano, Italian name. Philiciano Carpenito. My mother was Anna Carpenito. And uh, my, my mother worked in the mills. (Y: Yeah) She worked, and my father worked in the mills. They both worked in the Arlington Mills.

Y: Yeah. You were born in Lawrence?

J: I was born in Lawrence, on Elms Street.

Y: What about your (--) What year was that?

J: 1922. I'm only six months older than her?.

Y: Oh!

M: Same year.

J: We went to school together. We graduated the same high school, same year.

Y: So high school sweetheart?

J&M: Oh yes.

M: We went to the prom together.

J: [Comment unclear]

M: Then we went on our own. Like he went to work, we didn't see each other for a couple of years. Then it seems like we bumped into each other again and started a romance.

Y: So you worked in Arlington Mills as what?

J: Color combing they called it. Color combing department. We got these bales of uh, it was colored combing, like the army colors, you know like. And there was this wool, and big thick balls of, bales of wool, and you'd put them through the machine and make it thinner. Like you know, like uh (--)

Y: Oh, there's a machine outside. Is it the one (--)

M: We'll see, maybe it is.

J: Before the was. Then they were making, that was cloth, they were making cloth, but you know, that was those colors. You know, like there was all colors.

Y: Yeah. Someone came here last month, and he said this machine, he saw an accident. A Black man was killed, or injured. Is it really possible?

M: Oh yes it's possible.

Y: That uh (--)

J: Anything could be possible. I mean, you know.

M: Trapped in there, because I did see a girl once get her hair pulled off by the machines. And I was working in the other mill, Merrimack Mill. But she went under the machine to pick up something, and her hair got caught.

Y: You saw that? I mean the hair took the whole (--)

M: Right off.

Y: The whole hair?

M: Yeah, all the hair, because see, the machine was running. She went under there, but she didn't realize it, to pick up something. And boy!

Y: I thought in those days people couldn't have long hair, or(--)

M: No, they were suppose to wear a hairnet.

J: Oh no, you couldn't, no long hair. Nobody had long hair.

M: And she didn't have the hairnet on either.

J: No. And you had to wear your glasses if you had glasses. (M: safety glasses) I men oh no, they were very, very strict. You couldn't, women couldn't have log hair, or uh, they'd have to tie it up, you know. (M: But it was just carelessness) The safety was really, really, no, it was really good the safety.

Y: What about uh, did you have those big belts in uh, did you have them? (M: yeah, big belts) (J: yes) Or did they change when the machines get improves.

M: Well then we had the old machines with them. They had big belts that went around like that.

J: They had the old machines too. Yeah.

M: Those were dangerous if they broke, you know. Yeah.

Y: So they could uh, hit uh (--)

M: They could hit you, yeah. (J: Yeah) I have a sister-in-law that got hurt in the Ayer Mill with that. The belt broke and uh(--)

J: That's right too, Mary, yeah, your sister-in-law.

M: And she's been lame the rest of her life. Well they operated on her leg, but somehow they didn't do it right. So. [Unclear]

Y: Um, anyway, when did you start working?

J: 19, when I got out of high school, 1940. I graduated 1940, and my neighbor got me the job in the Arlington Mill.

Y: Neighbor, your parents? You said, your father (--)

J: Right. My father and my mother worked in the mill, but this friend of mine got me the job. My parents couldn't get me in. They couldn't get me in.

Y: Um. Why? Why that parent? Why that friend?

J: He was like a boss. Tommy was a boss.

Y: He was?

J: He was a boss.

Y: And as a high school graduate, couldn't you find another job in 1940?

J: Well you know, yes, but you know what? It's like going back. Now in those days, you go way way back, I'm the oldest of ten children.

Y: For you (--) Well I should ask those questions first. How many sisters and brothers did you have?

J: I have six brothers and four sisters. And my family, we were poor.

Y: Well everyone was poor then.

J: We were like getting so I had to go to work. I didn't want to go in the mills.

Y: You were number one?

J: I'm number one.

Y: I mean the oldest.

J: Right, the oldest boy. So I went to work in the mill. I had to. Not that I wanted to, whether I wanted or not. Then after I got married, I mean you know, like uh, after I got married, then I went, then I left the mill. I went to work in the Five and Ten. I used to do what they called, window dressing, interior decorating? You know, fixing the windows? (Y: Right) I did that. Then after that they closed the uh, they closed the store and I went, I did all kinds of things. From there, I worked there, I went to furs, making fur coats like a tailor. (Y: Right) I was artistic. (Y: Right) But see, when I, when I was single my father (--) Like I wanted to go to school in Boston. No way. My father, you have to go work in the mill. You know, we need the money this (--) It wasn't like today. Like in those days if my father told me to sit there, I sat there. (Y: Right) You can't go here, I couldn't go there. (Y: Right) You know? (Y: Yeah) So it wasn't, [unclear] brought up like that.

Y: When you married Madeline, did she move into the same house, or same building? Or you (-)

J: No, I lived in her parent's house. They had a bakery. Her father had a bakery. And above the bakery they lived.

M: We lived upstairs. The reason was, we couldn't find an apartment right after the war.

J: Couldn't find an apartment during the war.

Y: Many people did that.

M: So we lived there till we (--) Then we went on our own.

J: We lived with my in-laws. I lived with them for two years. Then we went(--)

M: Then we went on our own.

Y: Two years?

J: Then we went on our own. But I, even she could tell you. My mother and father, her mother and father, we always got along beautiful. They loved my wife like a daughter. They loved me like a son. We've never had any, any problems with our families. We had no problem at all. The only thing is like I wanted, like I says, then when I got married I told my father, "I'm going to go to school." I says you know, I want to, I want to, because now I'm married, I'm on my own. I don't want to stay in the mill all the time, you know? And then I went and I became a window dress. Interior decorating. And then after that I went to the Weiner Furs, I was making fur coats. See. Then after I got operated on my eyes, after fifteen years, I only was in Raytheon ten years, then my wife got me into Raytheon. See? I went there because I, (M: he had a cataract done.) Yeah, but I had a, I never worked on, like in Raytheon I never did no real textile work. I was more or less like what we would call (M: assembly, he did assembly work like) assembly, yeah. Little things.

Y: And what about your brothers? Did they work after you? Did they follow you?

J: Oh my brothers? Yes. My brothers all got good jobs. My brother, I have a brother, in fact now he sick, but I have a brother, school teacher.

Y: So they did not go to uh (-)

J: They went to college.

M: Well see, they had better opportunity after him.

J: They got better opportunities after.

Y: None of them worked at the mill?

J: No, uh, just uh, wait a minute? (M: I don't think so.) No, no.

Y: No, sisters, brothers?

J: No, no. I'm the only one who worked in the mill. No, they all went to Carpy, we call him Philip, (M: he does construction) he's construction. He went in construction. And because my uncles and my grandfather was construction.

M: See, they taught him the job, the young one.

J: And my brother Phil went in construction. My brother Bill is mechanics. My brother Raymond works in Raytheon.

M: Raymond is, see, he went to school. He's uh (--)

J: Yeah, he went to college, uh, drafting, right?

M: Draftsman, yeah. He did get the opportunity to go to school. And he works at Raytheon as a draftsman.

Y: What about sisters?

J: My sisters are, I have one sister, she was working in a store, bookkeeper.

M: Yeah, they did their office work.

J: And my sister Barbara worked in the [Marin?], she worked in Textile, and uh, where they made uh (--)

M: Marin Mills. Have you heard of that?

J: Marin Mills. The wools.

Y: No, I have not. No.

M: They make stockings and things.

J: Yeah, she worked there. Then my other sister, I have one sister, she never got married, uh, she never went to work, because my mother was sick. She took care of my mother all the time. So. But now she's working.

M: Now she works in Sears.

J: Because my parents are now deceased. My mother and father [unclear].

Y: So ten children, you're the only one huh?

J: Yeah, (M: in the mill) I'm the only one in the mill.

Y: In the mill. Well I'm still impressed that you could graduate from the high school. Ten children, and you know, that's other (--)

J: Yes. Right.

M: Well his mother used to stress that. I want you to go to school. She always say.

J: Yes. Stress that, I want you to go to school. We all, everybody graduated from high school and college.

Y: Everyone?

M: Yeah. Oh, all of them.

J: All of them, everybody.

M: Two of them went to, like he became a draftsman, so he went to school for that. And the other brother, there's one in Arizona, Ernie. He's uh, he's a draftsman.

J: My brother Ernie is in Arizona. He went to college. He's a draftsman.

M: They design swimming pools now.

Y: What about your sisters and brothers?

M: I had, well my mother had seven to begin with. Then she lost two little infants. (J: She only has one sister left) This is before I was born. And then I'm the youngest of the five that was left. My oldest brother had opportunity to go to college. And he was going to be a doctor, but then it didn't work out. He got married in his last term like, you know? So he got married. But my father had a bakery. And that's how he supported us, with the bakery. And my mother worked in the mill for a short time. Then she got out in 1936, she left the mill to help my father in the bakery. And then my brothers used to help my father in the bakery and so didn't my sister and I. Then my youngest brother was twenty-one, and he always wanted his own business, a grocery store. So my father set him up in the business, a grocery store, and sold the bread that we made too, you know.

Y: So three brothers, two sisters.

M: Yes.

Y: And you are the youngest one?

M: And I'm the youngest one. And now there's only my sister and I left.

J: He got killed in the war, her brother, youngest brother.

M: My youngest brother got drafted after my father started him in the business, they started drafting the young men. So he had to go in the service. He got killed in the service.

Y: When uh, World War II?

M: World War II, the Battle of the Bulge. And he was twenty-four. See, so of course my parents were pretty well broken up over that.

Y: So you are four now?

M: Just two, my sister and I. (J: two, that's all) My other two brothers died. (J: Everybody is dying) My oldest brother died while he was sick. Mostly sickness, you know. And my second one, he moved to Tennessee to be with his two girls who lived there, and he had an accident. He got killed by a car.

J: A guy hit him. He was, he was a policeman. He was directing traffic.

M: He had a nice job out there. He was very happy. He worked at the university of Tennessee as a security guard and a tour guard sort of. And he loved it. But this fellow hit him from the back, and he killed him that day.

Y: And now you're the only one who works at the mill?

M: Yeah. My (J: Yeah, she was the only one in her family) sister always did sewing work in the factory here. [Grico?] is still there. (Y: Oh yeah) That's what she did all of her life, sewing.

Y: Uh huh. This is uh, she's the um, her name is uh(--)

M: Her name is Josephine, my sister.

Y: Josephine, yeah. I like that name, Josephine.

M: Josephine. We're all named after my father's uh (--)

J: My sister Geraldine, she worked in Grico now.

M: Yeah, his sister works in the office.

J: I have a sister who works in the office.

M: She's office manager in fact. So we're name after my father's sister, sisters, you know. So that's all there is, my sister and I left. And uh (--)

Y: And how come you started in Arlington, but not um(--)

M: No, I really actually started when I was eighteen in the Merrimack Mills in Methuen. (Y: Oh?) Yeah. I was eighteen, I didn't know what I wanted to do. I had the opportunity to either become a hair dresser, or a nurse, but I, I just couldn't make up my mind. I was going to go into hairdressing. You know, then I said, oh, I didn't know if I wanted that. So my cousin got me the job in the Merrimack mills, and that's where I stayed in the mills. See, I should have you know, done something, but I didn't anyway.

Y: And where did you go to school?

M: I went to Lawrence High School, I graduated from, but younger schools, I went to quite a few schools. It was sort of neighborhood schools then. (Y: Right) We started in the Amesbury

Street School, which is the 101 building now where all the doctors are. That was the Amesbury Street School then. (Y: Oh yeah) And that was like first and second grade. [J: coughs] Then I went to the Hampshire Street school where there's a church there now. And that was fourth and fifth grade. Then I went to the Cross Street School. That was the sixth grade.

Y: What is the name? Cross?

M: Cross Street School. (Y: Where is it?) It's, the building is still there, but it's going up towards the cemetery way, up when you go to the Lawrence Cemetery.

J: It's a bad neighborhood now.

M: There's uh, yeah, it's all (--) And then from there I went to the Oliver School, which is on Haverhill Street. It's still there, the Oliver School. But now they have it I think for the retarded children in there.

Y: Why did you change so much?

M: Because that was our district. That's where we had to go. (J: Yeah, you had to go.) It isn't that we you know, (--)

Y: I mean from one school to another?

M: Yeah, certain grades? (Y: Because you moved also?) No, I lived in the same house, but that was the district we had to go to. All those schools. And then I went to the Oliver School, graduated from the Oliver. Then I went to the Lawrence High School, graduated from the Lawrence High school, 1940. And do you know we had the largest class in history. We were 749, him and I graduated. (J: Yeah, 1940) 749 students.

Y: Yeah. You graduated in the same year, huh?

M & J: Same year.

Y: And did you take classes together?

J: Yes. And that was only one class with her, the French.

M: Only one. French class.

J: We took French in those days. They didn't have Italian. I wanted to take Italian, but they didn't have Italian. So we took French, and I was in her class.

M: I used to love it. I liked it very much. I found it very (--)

J: Well see, they didn't have Italian yet. They had just started it. I think we were in the last year, in the Senior year they brought in Italian. But we could not take it because (J: we weren't

going to graduate) you had to have two years of a language. So I took French for three years. I really liked it, yeah.

Y: Can you tell me a little bit about your mother and father? What kind of people were they? And I mean your house and your neighborhood, were they mostly Italian?

M: Mostly Italians in our neighborhood.

Y: Before, after that I would like to know say, about the bakery, about your father's bakery. But let's start with your mother and father. What kind of people were they?

M: Well they came from the old country. I think they were eighteen years old huh? And you know, when they came, most of them came from Italy, they lived in with a lot of people.

Y: Sicily? Sicily?

M: No, Naples. My mother was born in Naples.

Y: I noticed that there's a different between Naples (M&J: and Sicily, yeah) and Sicily. They don't consider themselves, maybe it is exaggerated, but they almost ten to say, well Sicilians are different than us, or uh, [unclear].

M: Yes. (J: Oh yes) That's true. Yeah, that's true. That's always been a difference between.

Y: And they also lived in different neighborhoods.

M: Neighborhoods, (J: neighborhoods) that's right.

Y: Where did they live?

M: They lived I think, mostly down around Common Street, and Newbury Street, you know? Mostly Sicilians in that area.

J: Garden Street, Summer Street.

M: Garden Street, and they're still there in fact. There's a lot of them in that new place, the villa there. [Unclear] Villa. (J: There's all Sicilians)

Y: What about Naples?

M: Naples was mostly up out where we were. Elm Street, Lawrence Street, (J: Maple Street, Chestnut Street) Chestnut Street, and Maple Street, he lived. And it seems like down the other end was all Lebanese people. Down Hampshire Street, which they changed the name of the street. They changed it to Lebanon Street. (Y: Umhm) Yeah, down that area. I think there's still a lot down that area.

Y: So you were also from Naples, your parents?

J: Yes, my parents, yes.

Y: Would you marry her if she would be from? [laughs]

M: Sicily? [laughing]

Y: From Sicily?

J: Yes, because [unclear].

Y: I'm just kidding.

J: I know that. Now you want to hear something funny I'm going to tell you? I told you I have six brothers. I'm the only one who married an Italian. (Y: What about the others?) I have a brother who married French. (M: All nationalities) I have a brother, my brother Raymond is married to a German girl. And they all have beautiful marriages. I mean you can say that. I have my brother Bill is married to an Irish, Eleanor Hale she was. My brother Phillip is married to Gloria Bouchard. She's French. My brother Ernest is married to Margie, she's English. I don't know Margie's last name.

M: I think she's English. She's from Montana somewhere, I don't know. They live in Arizona.

J: They live in Arizona. So everybody is uh (--) And my brother Tony is single. I have one brother that's single. But they're all married, I'm the only one that married an Italian girls.

Y: You know what, this was the year 1946 when you married her? (M: Yes.) (J: Oh yeah!) What about before? Was it uh, I mean could you, could people in 1930's date girls from other nationalities? Like uh, 19, let's say 1920's or 1930's, early 30's?

J: They never did.

M: Well they didn't like it too much, (J: they didn't like it too much) but I think some did. But uh, they didn't like it too much.

Y: Yeah, some did.

J: Yes, some did, but not many.

M: Like the Lebanese liked to stay with the Lebanese, Italians with Italians. (J & Y: right) And maybe Irish, with Iris, you know? (Y: umhm, yeah) But that broke. Eventually that broke. (Y: Yeah) You know, that's all.

Y: So uh, I jump from one topic to another, but uh (J: That's all right) (M: I know, it's hard) So after you married Madeline you lived for two years in her (J: in her parent's house) in her

parents house. And uh, because they had a big house, or(--)

J: Right, they had a big house. They had three, you know, like downstairs was a bakery. Above the bakery was one house, and above there was another floor, two floors.

M: It was like sort of two families.

J: Like a two family.

M: And then you lived there for two years, and then you moved out.

J: We went, we got our own.

M: Yeah, we found an apartment.

J: We found an apartment. We found our own place.

Y: Well I, go ahead please.

M: Oh yeah, I was going to tell you about the bakery. What my father used to do.

Y: Yeah, tell me about the bakery, and maybe about the house a little bit more.

M: Yeah. Well the house was nice, you know?

Y: Where was that, in Elm Street?

M: On Elm Street, yeah.

J: It's not there no more now. This is all gone.

M: Oh, it's all gone, yeah, it's all gone.

J: No more. There's no more. There's no more Elm Street.

M: We kept it nice. It wasn't a gorgeous home, but in those days nobody had a beautiful gorgeous home like today, but everybody kept their homes nice. You know, you'd come in and you'd say, oooh! From the outside you wouldn't believe it was so nice. One the inside we kept it nice.

Y: So it was three floor?

M: Actually, yeah, with the bakery and then two upstairs from the bakery. And we had a cellar downstairs, you know, from the bakery. And uh, (--)

J: Her father used to make wine. He used to have all the barrels of wine in the cellar. I used to

help him.

M: He used to make his own wine, you know, my father had the wine press. And he had to carry the boxes of wine for you. They used to buy it here on Common Street. (J: The grapes) I mean the grapes, you know? On common street you buy all the grapes in the big boxes they used to come in.

Y: Do you know how to make wine?

M: I don't know, no. My father used to do that. And then he used to sit in the bakery at night with his friends. And they'd have a glass of wine and talk, you know? It was very nice. I mean as kids we grew up, we used to come home from school and have a nice little hot roll with butter on it for lunch, you know. That's why we were all nice and fat.

Y: No, that's not true. I like Italian bread though, I mean that's uh (--)

M: And you know, my father made it all by hand. He had an electric machine, but he never used it. He like to do it all by hand.

J: His pizza was the best in the city. I don't care where.

M: Everybody tells us that.

Y: I go to Tripoli Bakery there.

M: Tripoli, yes, yeah.

Y: Yeah, I by the Italian ones.

M: The bread, yeah. That's good.

J: [Unclear]

[phone rings. Yilderey answers is, "Heritage State Park. Hi. One second. Someone is on my line asking for Allyson."]

Y: About your father and mother, what kind of people were they? I mean um, (--)

M: Very humble. My father was a very very humble man.

Y: He was born in Italy?

M: He was born in Italy. Yeah, and they came here. I think they were about sixteen, or eighteen, I'm not sure. But when they came here (J: That man couldn't hurt a fly), like somebody brought them over in other words, you know, or somebody sponsored them as we say now. And they all, most of them lived in a house with many people, like boarders, right. And

then as they found a job, and then they you know, got a little more money, and then they got married. But as my mother used to tell us, she used to walk from where they live, to the Arlington mill looking for work. And you know, she got a job, and then uh, which wasn't much. Like she said, you could buy a coat for fifty cents, or a dress for fifty cents. So they got married.

Y: So did he started working in the mills and then moved to (--)

M: No, he always had a bakery, always business. (J: He always had a bakery, her father never worked in a mill) He had a grocery store before, well I was only two years old, so I don't remember that when I was born on Lawrence Street. He had a grocery store then. See, my sister was older. My brothers they remember that. Well my sister remembers more than I do. Then after he sold the grocery store, moved to Elm Street and started the bakery. And he made bread and pizza. And as I said, my brothers used to work. Then my sister and I used to help if they, you know, needed more help, because during the holidays they made, especially like Easter, they made all special Easter Breads. (Y: Umhm) And we used to help decorate them, you know. And then he had, the clubs used to come in, and they used to get big orders of pizza, or he used to bake these big trays of sausage for them, for the clubs. And he used to make the meat pie.

Y: What clubs? Social Clubs?

M: Social Clubs.

Y: Italian? Italian?

M: Yeah. There's the Rocky Club is still there.

Y: Rocky?

M: Rocky Club, yeah, it's up near the Leahy School. It's all new generation in there now. Yeah.

J: That's still there, but yeah, it's all the new.

M: Any club that wanted. And then for some of the ladies made their own bread. They'd bring it in in a bring round tub, (Y: Oh I see what you mean) right? And they, my father would bake the loaves for them for maybe a quarter. You know. He'd make all loaves, and then they'd pick it up. And some, some like their break well well done. Very crispy. He used to make round bread for some wanting round bread, or the long loaf, you know? So as kids we learned that. You know, like my sister was better at it than me. I used to help, but I'm too lazy to even make my own dough today. I buy it all made. [Laughs] But my brothers all very good. My oldest brother taught his son how to make pizza and little rolls. He used to make it at home, you know, for his wife. And my brother, the one that died in Tennessee, taught both of his son-in-laws to make the dough. They make their own bread, and they make their own pizza.

Y: So what about your mother? She came also with her father? Uh, from (--)

M: She came with her sister from the old country. See, her sister got married and was coming to

America. So she used to tell us that she had a step-mother, and she didn't get along too well with her step-mother. (Y: In uh?) In Italy. So she said to her father, I'm going to America with my sister whether you like it or not. Because she didn't like her step-mother. So she came on with her sister. But then her sister and her husband went back. So she stayed with these people who took her in. They were like maybe fourteen, or fifteen boarders in one house. [Unclear] took her in.

Y: While you are talking about that, let me show you. So your mother, then her sister left and she stayed here.

M: And she stayed her with those people, you know, then gradually she (--) (Y: Boarding house) Boarding house, yeah. And she got the job in the Arlington Mill. And then my father started, you know, he had his eye on her. (Y: Yeah) And they got married, you know. I don't know where they lived to tell you the truth, when they got married? I don't remember. (Y: Yeah) I always wished we had put more down on paper. (J: Lawrence Street) Sort of a family tree, you know, when they?

Y: You know I can give you copies of these tapes after we are done if you want to, as a record of your family if you want.

M: Yeah, that would be nice to safe, sure.

Y: What about your parents? (J: My parents?) Yeah, I mean can you tell me a little bit more about your parents? When did they, (--)

M: When they came here?

J: They came here. When my father came here he was living uh, my mother met my father (--) I forgot where they met.

Y: Well it's hard to know.

J: No, well like I say, they knew each other though, the families.

M: I see.

Y: Uh huh.

J: You know, like we say today, match up. You know, this girl is good for you.

Y: Right. So he came from Italy?

J: Italy, right.

Y: At the age of eighteen you say? No.

J: No, no. My father was uh, my mother was, my mother was sixteen (M: sixteen I think she said, yeah) Right. My father was ten years older than my mother. He was ten years older than her.

Y: When did he come?

J: And he came uh, I think he came after her.

M: I really don't know. I know he came from a different Province as they say.

J: Province, yeah. He come from uh, Belina. (M: Belina, they called it) Belina. [phone rings in background] And he worked in the mill.

Y: And so your father came before your mother? (J: Yeah) And what year was that? Do you know? (J: No. It was well?) Well how old was he?

J: My father was ten years older than my mother.

Y: Oh, you said ten years old, right.

J: Yeah, and well (--)

Y: No, you said he was ten years older than your mother, but how old was he when he came?

J: Oh when he came here! Well she was um, (M: She was sixteen. I remember her saying that) sixteen, and he must have been (--)

Y: Twenty-six?

J: Twenty-six, twenty-seven.

M: I don't know how old he was when he came though, from Italy.

J: Yeah, I don't know.

M: I don't remember that really.

Y: Anyway, so, so he came and then started working (--)

J: Yeah, he started working in the mill.

Y: In the Arlington Mill?

J: In the Arlington Mills. They got him a job, he was, he worked in the Arlington Mills. He always worked nights. I remember he worked in the mills they said. Then uh (--)

M: And she worked days, right? Your mother worked days, your father worked nights.

J: Right, she worked days, and he worked nights. Yeah, yeah, that's it.

Y: Oh, she worked also at the same mill?

J: Same mill, yeah, yeah.

Y: And then when, how did she take care of ten children? I mean uh, when (--) Did she keep working at the mill while she had ten children?

J: Oh, after? No, she quite. She had to quite because she was pregnant every year. [All chuckle] No, she quite after she got pregnant. She had to, I mean she left the mills because she had a baby every year it seemed like. And not only that, but this is funny, we had ten children. My mother had two sets of twins. (M: But two of them, two of them died.) Two of them, two of them died. One twin, Barb was a twin [unclear] she died. And the other one, my brother Philip is a twin. Two twins, they died.

Y: Yeah, why did they die in those days?

J: Well, what do you call it?

M: I don't know what happened, but (--)

J: I don't know in those days what they said.

M: I know one of my mother's had the influenza.

J: Yeah, that's some kind (Y: oh) of sickness (M: that was bad) you know, in those days. They had, (M: maybe [unclear]) because in those days when my other had her children, they were born in the house. There were no hospitals, you know? (Y: Right) And uh, so that's, because Barbara was uh, yeah, the both of them. Barbara's was uh (--)

M: I don't know what happened to them though, but I know my mother's.

J: I think Barbara's was born dead though, but my other, Philip was only a couple of months. (Y: Yeah) Twins.

M: Can you imagine raising ten children? That's something. Really. Well seven, we were close.

Y: Right. But seven, you said two of them died, right?

M: Two of them died as infants, before I was born. (J: Before she was born, right) Yeah.

Y: And so you graduated from uh, from Lawrence high, and you were eighteen years old, or

something.

M: Eighteen, yeah. Just made eighteen in August. Like I graduated in June, I was eighteen in August.

Y: And you said you had opportunities for becoming (--)

M: I thought I wanted to be a hairdresser, or a nurse, and then I changed my mind.

J: You sister, she wanted to be a nurse, but they wouldn't let her.

M: My sister wanted to be a nurse. She liked it better than I. But in those days the old folks, they didn't think that was so good, taking care of sick people. And you get a disease, and you're [few words unclear]. It's a hard occupation. It is today anyways. (Y: Umhm) So I went to work in the mill and that was it. I couldn't(--)

Y: And you said, who found the job for you?

M: A cousin of mine, Anna. She was working in the Merrimack Mills already. So she (--)

J: In those days that's the only way you could get a job. Somebody had to get it for you.

M: Yeah, you had to know. Somebody asked for you and (--)

J: You couldn't go there yourself because, somebody asked them for you, you know what I mean? It was hard.

Y: It was uh, what year was that? In uh(--)

M: Well I was eighteen. That would have to be 1940.

J: It would be '40 you started. Forty.

M: That's right, 1940 when I graduated.

Y: I mean still in 1940's to find a job you had to know someone?

M: You had to know somebody. (Y: Somebody) Really. As my, my mother got hers by luck she said. Her and her girlfriend went in that day, but she got hired and her girlfriend didn't. So she used to tell us the story, because she used to say to her girlfriend, dress up and look nice and clean. You know?

Side A ends

Side B begins

Y: When did they start doing such things? Do you remember?

J: Start what?

M: Filling out papers like.

Y: Papers, you know, like application forms today, and then they tell you, you know, (--)

J: I think when you got about 1940 you had to fill in papers?

M: Yeah? (Y: You did?) I don't remember that, I knew she took me in.

J: Yes. Sure.

M: And I got (--)

J: Of course they had to know your name, where you lived. Right, yeah.

M: Name and address mostly, but no big forms. I don't remember.

J: Yeah, no big form. You know, just (--)

M: After that, say like Raytheon, or even (J: yeah, yeah), well when I went to that job for mending.

J: Yeah, but Raytheon, Raytheon didn't come till now.

M: Yeah. From the Merrimack Mills, I went to the Arlington Mills, and it was no filling out paper. Just your name and address more or less. Social security. (Y: Right) If you had experience they took you in fast.

J: With Raytheon it's different, because that's a government place. They got to know everything. Your blood type and everything they want to know from you. At Raytheon you have to, it's really strict to fill in an application.

M: Raytheon is very strict.

Y: And you also started in 1940's?

J: 1940 I started. (Y: 40?) Yeah.

M: Yeah, you went to the Arlington. (J: In the mill)

Y: How was your, what was your first day impression of work? I mean what do you remember when you, when you walked in the (--)

M: When I walked in the mill? Well I was sort of in awe. I didn't know. I looked around, it

was such a big place, you know.

J: The noise.

M: And very noisy. When the machinery is running it's very noisy. You can hardly hear yourself talk.

Y: What did you do?

M: I was a bobbin setter. That was the first job. They trained bobbins, they trained you what to do. In other words the uh, we used to take the filled bobbins off and put the empty one. [J: coughs] Machine would run, you know, back and forth, and fill up the bobbins with the yarn. And then when it was full it would stop, and we had to take them all off. Like it was a row in the bottom and a row on top. So you take the full ones off and put them on top, put the empty ones down at the bottom. It was sort of like a motion like milking a cow.

Y: Was it so fast that you (--)

M: Fast, very fast. You had to go very fast. It was piece work they called it. You had to go fast.

Y: So they counted the bobbins, how many?

M: They counted how many you did a day.

J: See, I never worked piece work, so I was lucky.

M: Yeah, that was piece work. That's the only thing I hated about it. Because you had to move fast whether you liked it or not, or they wouldn't keep you. So that's where I learned that. And then I went to the Arlington Mills, because that Merrimack Mills, they paid very cheap there. Very very (--)

Y: How long did you work there?

M: I worked there about a year.

Y: One year? (M: Yeah) How cheap was that, do you remember?

M: Oh in those days see now, we used to get like maybe seventeen, or eighteen dollars a week. That was for forty hours. But he was known to pay very cheap wages. Gaunt, Mr. Gaunt owned that Merrimack Mills. (Y: Mr. Gaunt?) Gaunt, G A U N T. (J: Gaunt) They call it Gaunt Square now. He owned all that property over there. And then I went to the Arlington Mills. And that was just at hard. It was a very hard job.

Y: What did you do?

M: The same thing, bobbin setting. And it was piece work. And they had some frames like uh, I forget how many, a certain amount, in the front part that they doffed every twenty minutes we had to do this. It was so fast. They called them the draper bobbins. Tha machine stopped every twenty minutes. That's how fast it went. And we had to do that as fast as that. Because the women that were running the machine, you know, they used to tie up the yarn to get it started. That's how they made their money. So if that was stopped too long, they lost money. So we had to move fast to do that. Every twenty minutes, the drapper bobbins. The other ones would be maybe uh, like a half an hour, three quarters of an hour before it stopped. So that was piece work. And in the summertime, very very hot. No air condition naturally. They used to open the windows, but it was so terrible to work with that heat. And uh, (--)

Y: What about in winter?

M: Winter was okay, you know?

Y: Why was it noisy?

M: The machinery, very noisy. Machinery, you can't believe it. If you ever went in that room, where that huh, very noisy. And if you ever went in the weave room, oh, very very noisy.

M: Very noisy. The machines were very noisy. Mostly all men worked then in the weave room. You've probably have seen that machinery. They have it at the museum there in Andover. have you seen it? (Y: Yeah. That's why it's so noisy) Very very noisy. You know what, they made some, I wish I could, if I had one, old bobbins, how they make lamps out of them and everything. You have a picture, see?

Y: Yeah, there are some pictures, but I don't know if uh (--) That is something like (--)

M: Yeah, that's it. See, this here looks like the English drawing. My mother did that, and I think your mother did that. Does it say? (J: Yeah, that's it) See these are bigger, bigger ones. The English drawing. (J: That's a spinning room) Yeah, that's the spinning room they call it. (Y: Yeah) Yeah, that's it. See these bobbins. They go from top to bottom. See, they fill up and then you take the full ones out and put the empty ones there. See, this looks like the English drawing I think. It goes down like this onto the bobbin.

Y: What is the difference between English drawing and French drawing?

M: I don't know what French drawing? I know English drawing (--)

Y: I mean what is, why do you call it the English drawing?

M: Because that's what they called it. I don't know. They were bigger, bigger, much bigger bobbins. See, the ones we did were smaller. Almost like a, like a cone or somethings. But these are big fat ones, they're heavy ones which much more yarn on it.

Y: Yeah, what about this one here?

M: Let's see what this is.

Y: Yeah, that's uh, that could be the drawing room. They're the bigger ones. Does it say here? No, huh. See it was spooling, see spooling room. Yeah, those are bigger ones, yeah. My mother did this here. English drawing it looks like to me. But the ones we did were smaller, and they didn't go, see these go right from way up there. We had it sort of maybe right here, from here to there. And as all that filled up, see this whole machine would all stop and you had to take them all off and put the empty ones on. (Y: Is this what you did?) And when that breaks they tie it up into a knot, a special knot they made so it wouldn't show. Like a weavers not they called it. I've seen the roving frames, yeah. The rovings, see these are big ones. They call them rovings, roving frames. But we had the smaller ones. They're like maybe about this round. And like tall like a candle, you know? See that one? Oh yeah, see that looks like the weave room, right? (J: Weave room, that's the weave room) Slashing, oh it says slashing there. Oh very noisy, all this machinery. You couldn't hear yourself talk.

Y: How, how, did you talk to your friends? Next neighbor friends? Did you have (--)

M: Yeah, we could talk, but we had to holler. But then you couldn't talk that much, because you had to keep busy. You know, you had to keep busy on this was piece work. I don't know about this year, but we had to do piece work.

Y: So if you talked too much then (--)

M: You wouldn't earn your pay. They'd give you a warning. Like say you were suppose to make in those days, well I'm just going to give you, say maybe it was twenty, or twenty-five dollars a week, right? And if you made under your pay, they give you a warning, which we got once in the Wood Mill, because we made a little less that week. And they give you a written warning that you didn't (--)

Y: What do they say?

M: You know, you, well they can (--)

J: You better work, or they'll let you go.

M: Yeah, they let you go if you don't earn your, what you're suppose to make. You know, there was some that didn't care.

J: They were strict in those days, that's why.

M: That's why it was piece work, you had to make your pay, as they called it.

Y: Yeah, I mean I thought piece work, that is your business. If you work slowly, then you make less money.

M: No, because you have to earn that money. If you were slow and didn't, didn't make it, they wouldn't keep you. You know, if they give you one chance, like a warning, as we did, because I remember it was only very little under my pay, because I hated that job so much I just got fed-up. But they gave us a warning, my friend and I, because we didn't make what we were suppose to make. They're not going to pay you if you don't earn it. See, the piece work is what you earn is what you get.

Y: And what about friends? Did you make friends while (--)

M&J: Oh yeah, a lot of friends.

M: You know, you work (Y: Well I mean if you work on piece work), work together, it's like family. Well lunch hours. You know, and (--)

J: Within lunch hour. We'd have what they called, coffee break.

M: Lunch hours, coffee breaks.

J: You have your coffee break. You know, you have fifteen minutes to go for coffee. Or lunch hour, half an hour. You go, you have your friends.

Y: How many breaks did you have?

J: What's it, like ten minutes in the morning? Ten minutes in the afternoon.

M: Ten minutes, yeah. Ten minutes is usual.

Y: Ten minutes in the morning?

J: And ten minutes in the afternoon.

Y: What about lunch break?

J: Lunch break was a half an hour.

M: Half an hour then, yeah. Half an hour.

Y: And did you bring your sandwich, or(--)

J

M: Yeah, you brought your own lunch.

J: Yeah, we used to bring our own lunch all the time.

Y: What about the other people? They also brought a sandwich?

J: Everybody. They used to all bring their own.

M: I think most people did.

J: Most people, because they didn't have no uh(--)

M: They used to have little ovens where you could warm up something if you wanted to bring [unclear].

J: Yeah, machines like, you know, but uh (--)

M: Some of them used to bring the little pails.

J: Everybody used to bring their own lunch.

M: Yeah, mostly everybody brought their own lunch.

Y: They talk about sandwiches other nationalities took there. They say, oh the Polish they always brought uh (--)

M: Brought their own lunch, like kilbasa.

Y: And the Italians, oh they take like salami, or [unclear].

M: The Italian bring uh, [laughs] salami.

J: Spaghetti, she put salami, right.

Y: Did you think it was this too?

M: Oh eggplant, or whatever.

J: Yes. Yes. Eggplant, right.

M: You know what? I used to go in the Arlington Mill, because my father used to make the pizza. I used to bring for myself and my friend that we worked together. We used to walk all the way to the Arlington Mill from Elm Street.

Y: How long does it take? How long did it take?

M: It used to take us about fifteen, or twenty minutes.

J: Oh sure.

M: So uh, once a week I used to bring a pizza for her and I for our lunch. They all start you know, say ooh, where did you get the pizza? Where did you get the pizza? So I said, well my father makes it every (--) You know, they were big squares. Like what you get today was only a

nickel for that square. (J: Yeah, but in those days [unclear]. Yeah, and he made the nice thick pizza. So I started taking orders. Everybody, oh bring me some, oh bring me some, of bring me some, you know? Well we ended up with two big, great big shopping bags my friend and I were carrying once a week.

Y: So you charged money obviously, right?

M: I wasn't making any money to tell you the truth. See, I didn't know, I wasn't smart enough then. I charged them a nickel. Of course it was good. And, but then I stopped, because it started to get too much. And then some people, they forget to pay you, even a nickel, right? And I wasn't about to go and ask them, you know. Beg them for the money they owe me? So I, I stopped it all. I used to bring it, just my friend and I. (Y: Yeah)

Y: You, did you also walk to work?

J: Oh yeah, I walked to work.

Y: I guess in those days (J: everybody walked) you could see lots (M: mostly everybody walked) of people in the morning.

J: Right. Everybody walked. I used to work at two o'clock to ten o'clock at night. I used to walk back and forth. It was nothing. Today you couldn't (--) In those days you couldn't worry about anything. (M: Nobody grabbing you, or) Nobody would uh, today a woman could never with her pocketbook. Never. We didn't even locked the doors of our house.

M: We didn't even lock the door of our house. That's how nice it was. You know, we weren't afraid. Nobody ever bothered you in those days, nobody. Everybody was neighborly and friendly, and it was nice.

Y: An mostly Italian people in your neighborhood?

J: Yes, (M: mostly, yeah) mostly Italian. Where we lived they were all Italian.

Y: And people said they kept the doors (--)

Intercom voice: May I have your attention please?

F: Oh, that's for the kids.

Intercom voice: Would you like to proceed to the first floor?

Y: Um, well we are talking one hour, and I did not, we did not started talking about.

M: All the things you want to know. (Y: Yeah) Well give us a few more.

Y: Um, um, if you are tired we can stop and I can, we can maybe talk another day.

M: Another time. It's up to you. How do you feel?

J: Yeah, I think I'd rather. You can come when Inez, and talk better, because she could tell you even more, you know?

Y: Also I'd like to talk to you separately, because when I asked you about your parents, (M: You get mixed up, yeah) and I asked Madeline, and then I don't (--)

M: Yeah, one at a time is better. It's true.

Y: And so maybe we go upstairs, or uh, I mean there's things, you know, (--) Let me see how much tape we have, maybe we talk a little bit more. And then um, after the tape is over. Would you mind ten more minutes? (J: No.) No? (M: No.) I mean you can cough, you know what I mean. That does not uh, doesn't matter.

J: Ten more minutes. Yeah, all right, as long as it (--) Yeah. Okay.

Y: Um, so you worked at the Arlington, the bobbin setter?

M: Bobbin setter, yeah.

Y: For how many years?

M: I worked there for maybe about a year. And then from there I went to the Wood Mill. My same cousin, my friend, cousin went there. She was working (--) No, she was working nights then I think. At that time, it was during the war, they had what they called the victory shift.

Y: Victory shift? I never heard that.

M: Yeah, victory shift. It was from 2:30 to 8:30. They called it a victory shift during the war.

Y: 2:30, 2:30 at (M: at night) at night? In the morning.

M: In the afternoon. 2:30 in the afternoon, till 8:30 at night.

Y: Oh, that's interesting.

M: So she said, if you want to come, you know, come. It will be nights. Because she said it was better there. Conditions were better there. It was the same, doing (--) Well it wasn't, no, it wasn't bobbin setting, it was universal winding they called that. It's with the bobbins also, but you had to, I ran my own machine.

Y: Just uh, it doesn't matter. Feel free.

J: This cold is driving me crazy.

M: He's dry. He's been taking everything for it. It takes time. He's only had it since Friday.

Y: But uh, don't, really don't worry. So it must be 1943, 44.

M: It had to be, yeah. That was universal winding. I did that for, let's see, because when I went into mending I think it was forty-seven. I'm not sure. I did that universal winding. Well I was working nights for awhile. That's when he was in the service then. See, so I figured it was good for me to work at night. But then I, I didn't like it too much after awhile, because your nights, you couldn't go out if you wanted to. You know, not to a movie or something. So I had asked the boss. You know, so I said, you know, I said if there's an opportunity on days, I'd rather work days. He says, oh I thought you liked nights? I says, well I don't like it too much right now. So I said, okay. He says, come in the next day. So I started days. And that was another piecework job where we had to just hurry up and go. We had twenty ends. Small machine. Ten here and ten there. We had to turn around all, tie them up if they broke. And you know, they'd fill up, you know? And when it was full you take them off and start again. So I didn't like that job too much. It was too much piece work. Too much rush, rush, rush. So then they posted on the board, if you were interested in office work, or uh, mending, to learn mending. Because that was a very hard job to get. Most people had to pay to get that job. They had to be trained first before we could get it. So I put my name for both. My friend, my other friend, she had put hers. So I said if they call me for office work, I think I can get by on that, because I took typing in school, you know, and shorthand. I'm going to try for either one. I got to get out of here. So they called so many people for mending. And I was one of them. I was lucky I got called. And then when they hired us for that, that's when they really gave us a strict physical, and fill out papers. And so they had these two women train us for uh, we had to put a training period in for eleven hundred hours. And they taught us mending, which was quite a still. You know, you mend the cloth.

Y: What uh, what does it mean exactly, to mend cloth?

M: If your cloth has a thread missing, you notice sometimes in the stores, you see it's damaged, okay. Well we were trained to sew that thread in. The whole thread across the cloth.

Y: How? Do you take off and then put new things in?

M: Yeah, we get thread to match that. You take it right from the material itself, from the end, and you sew that right in. Could be, like we learned a different pattern. It's two stitches. Two and two, see, or three and two. That's what those two woman taught us. We were one whole row of all younger girls. They used to call us the trainees. And these are the girls that we stuck together all of these years. Because the older women had been there maybe twenty-five and thirty years already. Because that job was hard to get. Nobody could get in the mending room, unless you paid and learned the skill first. Because they used to say in those days, "you marry a mender, you marry a three tenement house", that's how much money they made. [Laughs] It was a big joke. So they taught us and we trained for eleven hundred hours. Then that was sort of piece work. We went on our own, but we did very well. The money was very good there.

Y: Okay, so menders I heard that they were, they were paid very well.

M: Yeah, very (J: that was the best job) yeah. The faster you went the more money you made. See. Now some people can't grasp it. You know, but we did good. All my friends, we did, we used to love that work. We loved it. We made good money and we enjoyed it. We used to help one another, the new girls. The other ones, forget it. They wouldn't give you the right time. They were so busy making their money, because they had been there for so long. But the uh, it didn't last long enough. But five years we worked there and then the mills closed. Our boss used to tell us that. Sometimes we'd squawk about the work, or something, you know, he'd say, you girls are going to be sorry, because they're going to move down south.

Y: They started telling you that five years in advance?

M: Yeah, yeah. Because he said, you know, they had already gone to look down south where to put the mills. So we used to say to him, yeah, but they don't work as fast as we do, you know that. Yeah, well someday. So we didn't believe it, but it did happen.

J: It did, it did happen.

M: It went. Yeah, five years we had that job. And then if you were trained (--)

Y: So it must happen in 1949?

M: Yeah. I think it's about that.

Y: '49, and then in '54 they closed entirely.

M: Yeah. So, and they had like mending also further, they called it finished mending, which they were going to teach us. That was even better. They mended the hole. Do you know when you get a cigarette burn? (Y: Yeah) Well they mend that and you never know it was there. You know, but we didn't get to learn that, because the mills closed.

Y: You said you got training, 1100 hours?

M: 1100 hours that we had to train to learn.

Y: That's a lot. 1100 hours?

J: Yeah, it was a lot.

M: Yup.

Y: They paid you?

M: They paid us, at that time I think we were getting maybe, we were talking about that. I think we were getting about thirty-six dollars then, plus a cost of living bonus they called it. They gave us that. It was like (--)

Y: They used to get big money. The menders always got paid (--)

M: Almost eighteen dollars, they gave us that. A cost of living bonus they called it then. And well we were thrilled to get the job, you know, so. Because after that we made good money, because we, you know, we learned. And as I said, the faster you worked, the more money you made, you know?

Y: Why do they call, I mean that's a dumb question, I know, but I (--)

M: No, there's no such thing as a dumb question.

Y: I know that's not a good question, but I still want to ask that. Why do they call Victory Shift?

M: Victory Shift? It was during the war. (J: during the war)

Y: That's why I said (--) [Chuckles]

M: Yeah, right. See, during the war (J: during the war, and it was nights [unclear].) it was easy for some people to do that shift I guess, you know? Like maybe mothers, but I wasn't married.

J: My brother was going to school, and he was working the victory shifts.

M: That's right. His brother Tommy was going (--)

J: He was going to college, he was working the victory shift.

M: When he was becoming a school teacher, see? So that was (--)

Y: Were people patriotic in those war years? I mean uh, (--)

M: Oh yeah, yeah, they were.

Y: I mean all those different nationalities, but they all felt uh, (--)

J: But they were, yes, Americans.

M: They all felt, yeah. Yeah.

Y: And what about the bosses? They were Italians? Were they Italians?

M: No, the boss we had was English I think. His name was Joe Duxbury.

J: My boss was Irish.

M: Yeah, his was Irish. There were some Italians. All mixed.

Y: I mean the Wood Mill, most of the people were, most of them were Italians.

J: Italians, right.

M: Well not most of them. The mending room was mixed, very mixed. (Y: mending room?) Yeah, English, Irish.

J: We had a lot of English.

M: Yeah, a lot of English in the mending room. I don't know why?

J: That's right too, yeah.

Y: Well I heard that the mending room was uh, (--)

M: There's a couple of them still living. They're eighty-one, eighty-two.

Y: Who? The (--)

M: Worked in the mending room. She's, Ann Hope, she's uh, Russian.

J: If you ever saw Aunt Vivian, she'd be a good woman to talk to.

M: And this, you know Inez, her sister-in-law, (--)

J: There's a woman you could talk to.

M: We should, we should, well you know that day she came, we had asked her to come. But then she came after we, we left. She said she'd come in. She had a (--)

Y: Ann, plus, what's her name?

M: Her name is Ann Finnerty. She lives at the beach for the summer.

J: Oh, she's a good woman. [Unclear], she's very smart.

M: She's eighty-one years old. She mended for many years.

J: And she talks beautiful English. That's Inez' sister [unclear].

M: Yeah, she's very stylish and everything. For eighty-one, you wouldn't believe it.

J: We ought to bring her here.

M: Well when we get to see her. See, she lives at the beach all summer.

Y: Umhm. So she's a beach, beach bum?

M: She's a beach bum. She loves the beach.

Y: So Madeline, you worked first this bobbin setter.

M: I started as bobbin setter.

Y: You started, and then Arlington Mill, and then you moved to (M: Wood Mill) Wood Mill? And then mending. (M: And then mending) And if you, all these jobs you did in the mill, which one was kind of fun? You know, which satisfied you?

M: I would say mending. (J: Mending. You had more fun there) Yeah, I was more relaxed on that job. (J: Right. You made big money) And I made good money. It was piecework, but it wasn't as bad as the other jobs in the mills that you really had to go, go, go, go, go. This was more relaxed. You know, sewing. And you know, as I said, the faster you go the more money you make. But I was more relaxed on that job. I didn't mind it.

Y: But you always worked on piece work?

M: Yes.

Y: I mean even mending was piece work? (M: Yeah, yeah.) And uh, so did you find enough time to socialize with people? I mean you were not concerned that you would make less money?

M: Well it wasn't that hard to do. You could talk to your next, you know, your next neighbor shall we say? In fact the, most of them, see this one whole row, the outside row were all the young ones. They used to call us the kids, and the trainees. But next to us we all had an older woman that had been there many years, you know. Some of them were helpful. They would help you if you got stuck a little bit. Like we'd say, oh gee, I don't know, I can't, (--) The one that was next to me, she was wonderful. I was just telling him last night, because they were playing the old songs on the, the Pop concert last night. And she was a jolly woman. And she'd say (Y: Jelly?), jolly. Very jolly. She'd say, "oh, let's sing for awhile. Forget the work, forget the money," she'd say to us. So we'd sing, and the boss would look. "What's going on here?" "Oh, we're having some fun." He wouldn't say anything, you know? But uh, that was a very relaxing job. We really enjoyed it.

Y: You are talking about mending?

M: Mending, yeah.

Y: What kind of songs did you sing?

M: Old fashion, the old (--) This woman taught us, well that song.

Y: I'm a musician. I always ask people what kind of songs did you sing? And nobody remembers anything. I mean uh (--)

M: Well last night he played a melody of old tunes on the Pop concert, and one of them was that, "I was strolling to the park one day, in the merry, merry month of May." (Y: oh) And I forgot the words already. I was telling him last night.

J: I love music too. Jazz. I used to love Jazz when I was a kid. I used to play jazz.

M: And it says, "I was going to the park one day, in the merry merry month of May," oh, I forget in between, "and a smile was all she gave to me." And then we'd take you know, tweezers that was used and we'd bang on the light like that. "Lala, lala, lala, lala, la." And that's when the boss would look up, he said, "what's going on here?" [All laugh] That woman was wonderful. She passed away. She was a fun person. She liked the younger generation, even those days. Like see now, there's, we say, "oh, the younger generation", this and that. She liked us, but some of them didn't have the patience to bother with us. That's why when I went to Raytheon, well I was an inspector for, I got hired as an inspector in Raytheon. And then I was a group leader for ten years.

J: She always had a good job, all the time.

M: And I, I liked working there too, it was very nice. And uh, (--)

Y: So maybe you talk about that Raytheon later. But uh, what about, was it boring, bobbin setting, before you moved to uh (--)

M: Yeah, that was a boring job. It was.

Y: I mean repetitive thing?

M: Yeah, all day long, that's what we did. That was boring. Not only, as I said, it was so, you had to go so fast that is just (--)

J: My job was boring too.

M: Well I mean I lost a lot of weight on that job, because sometimes you couldn't even stop to have your lunch like on lunch break, on ten minute break, because those machines had to run. As I said, if they didn't run those women were losing money. They used to holler at us, because sometimes they all stopped together. So we tried to take the first one, and the next one. And then they'd say, mine was first, mine was first! Well I mean, we'll get to it we'd say, you know, but they were losing money if we didn't hurry up and doff their frames. That's what they called it, doffing. (Y: Yeah) So I didn't like that. Oh! I used to go home so tired. So fast.

Y: So you had to feed, you had to feed the machines so they can produce?

M: Yeah. See, we used to get up a five o'clock. We had to be to work at six then. We used to work six to two thirty. And when I went home I had to take a nap for an hour. You'd be too tired, but mending wasn't like that. It was relaxing.

Y: And your job, you did the same thing, feeding the machine?

J: See, mine was easy. Yeah. Feeding the machine the yarn and make these balls. They called like uh, it was colored combing with balls of yarn, you know? And you put like four on a rack, and they go into the machine, make one big one. And uh, it was a boring job, you know, but uh (--)

Y: So you did it for ten years, ten years or so?

J: Mind you (--) Um?

Y: You did the same job (J: same job) ten years?

J: Yeah, more or less, same room like, you know, but (--)

Y: Was it piece work?

J: No, no. (Y: did they weigh how many?) No, no. No piece work.

M: That's the difference when it's not. You can relax.

J: Yeah, it was no piece work, and nobody would push you. You know what I mean? The boss was good to me. I mean, and uh, so they were all uh (--) But it was like everything else. There was like, when I look back, you know, a lot of those place like she said, in the mill, [unclear] my friend, my neighbor, he got me the job in the mill. And he got his, [unclear] you had to know somebody to get in these jobs, you know what I mean? Some people don't say it, but the only way you could get a job, somebody had to get it for you.

Y: Right.

J: Like I was a dye, I worked in one room there, there was, they're all dead now, but Johnny Coutu, him and his wife, his two sons and a daughter. (M: All the family) All were same family, all worked together. All together, yeah. Husband and wife, two sons, and two daughters.

M: Maybe the father got the son in, and the other one (--)

Y: In the same, (J: same room, yeah) and next to each other? Same room?

J: Same room.

Y: Were there other people like that? I mean are (--)

J: A lot of places, a lot of departments.

M: Raytheon is like that. A lot of families in there.

J: Yeah, Raytheon.

Y: Really?

J: Yes!

M: Yeah, a lot of families.

Y: I thought it was in textile so, but not in Raytheon.

M: Raytheon is too. There's four or five in one family working there.

J: Yeah, but they're not in the same room though. Different departments.

M: No, not in the same room, but they're, they're in there.

j: Different departments, yeah.

Y: Well if she worked on piece work, I think she felt a little pressure.

M: Oh yeah!

Y: But you did not work in uh (--)

J: I didn't have, I had no pressure [unclear].

M: Too much [unclear].

Y: You must have had a lot of time to socialize with your co- workers. Did you do, did you tell jokes, or did you do uh (--)

J: Oh yes! I was always a clown. In fact when I was younger I was like a clown all the time.
(M: laughs)

Y: What did you do?

J: I used to love to sing and dance you know. And I always, always make silly. Like you know in those days I was silly. Like now, they tell me now I'm getting to be an old (--)

M: Well, well you know, he's older now. He's sister goes, you're change, you different, this and that. But I mean as you get older, I mean you, you know, he's still funny.

Y: [Few words unclear]

M: No.

J: I'm sixty-six years old. (Y: You are?) Sixty-six.

Y: Well you both look very good.

J: She's sixty-five.

M: Thank you. I'm going to be sixty-six next month.

Y: And did you tell jokes in those days?

J: Oh yes, we told jokes, you know?

M: Oh yes!

J: But you know, in those days they were very strict. Like we talk about, like, like not to change the subject now. When I was going out with my wife, you know, we tell these stories to our friends now, and to my nephews. They don't believe this, the kids. When I was going out with my wife, I told you, I used to go out with her. They lived above the bakery. The bakery was downstairs. If I went over there to see my wife, I couldn't go upstairs if she was alone. I couldn't go. (M: laughs)

Y: How could you have, from the window? (M: I had to come down [laughing])

J: You know, yeah. My father-in-law would call her downstairs, and my mother-in-law would be there. Then (--)(

Y: But you were not married though?

J: No, no, I wasn't married. No, no. We're talking about (--)

Y: Oh, you did not deserve it.

M: Strict in those days.

J: After I got married, I mean we do beautiful. No, but then, when I was going out with her, then it was funny. We used to walk, nobody had a car then. And I lived on Maple Street, two streets from her, down, and we used to go dancing. Eleven o'clock the dance would be over. Eleven o'clock her father, or her brother would be outside waiting.

Y: Outside of the dance?

J: Yes, (M: watching. Oh, too strict) watching. We could come home, like we could walk. (M: Every strict)

Y: Oh, that's good. [Laughs]

J: You know, we laugh now. Just like we talk about my sister in Florida too. Like we were saying one time, she tells the story all the time. My sister in Florida, she married a boy, well at the time he had money. I mean he always, they had everything. He had a convertible, he had a car. He was rich, he came from Andover, and this and that. So somebody told my mother. My mother was strict too, you know. "I don't want you going in the car alone with him." She couldn't go in the car with him alone. So a lot of times we had to go with him, me and my wife, or my other sister, but it always had to be somebody [unclear]. So one time they stopped at the corner. There was like how do you say, an ice cream stand, to get an ice cream. Somebody told my mother that my sister was there. Now this is in the afternoon. My mother would go with the flash light, "what are you doing over here?"

M: Ah! She was parking down there.

J: She was parking. Oh, we laugh about those things.

M: Those were the old fashion days. No more.

Y: So when your father or brother was waiting, I guess you couldn't even give her a good night kiss.

J: Oh, I could give her a good night kiss. Yeah, like you know, quick, a quick. [All laughing]
I'd go there (--)